

VZCZCXYZ0005
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHFRA #1456 1011523
ZNY CCCCC ZZH ZUI RUEWMCE4652 1011509
O 111523Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 001456

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/11/2017
TAGS: [FR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [MO](#) [AG](#) [WI](#)
SUBJECT: FRENCH PONDER UNSC MOVES ON WESTERN SAHARA

REF: STATE 47328

CLASSIFIED BY: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT, REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D).

PAGE 02 RUEHFRA1456 C O N F I D E N T I A L

11. (C) SUMMARY: FRENCH MFA OFFICIALS ARE SOMEWHAT CONCERNED THAT THE POLISARIO -- IN THE HOPE OF PREEMPTING ANY USG ENDORSEMENT OF THE MOROCCAN AUTONOMY PLAN -- WILL AGREE TO DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH RABAT "WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS," WHILE INSISTING THAT THE MOROCCAN AUTONOMY PLAN CANNOT SERVE AS A BASIS FOR SUCH TALKS. NONETHELESS, THE FRENCH ARE ANXIOUS TO BE HELPFUL, AND THE MFA IS INSTRUCTING ITS MISSIONS IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK TO COORDINATE CLOSELY WITH THE DEPARTMENT ON THE CONTENT OF, AND TACTICS FOR PASSING, A NEW UNSCR EXTENDING MINURSO'S MANDATE. END SUMMARY.

CONCERN OVER "WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS"

12. (C) POLOFF DELIVERED REFTTEL DEMARCHE ON APRIL 11 TO CHRISTIAN TESTO, MFA DAS-EQUIVALENT FOR THE MAGHREB, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY JAY DHARMADHIKARI, THE QUAI'S ALGERIA DESK OFFICER, AND BY NICOLAS KASSIANIDES FROM THE MFA'S IO DIRECTORATE. TESTO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE UPDATE ON

PAGE 03 RUEHFRA1456 C O N F I D E N T I A L

OUR THINKING, AND ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION ABOUT THE USG'S POSITION ON CONVENING DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND THE POLISARIO WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. SPECIFICALLY, HE WONDERED WHETHER THE POLISARIO MIGHT SEIZE UPON THE "WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS" STIPULATION TO AVOID DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE MOROCCAN AUTONOMY PLAN. "THE DANGER IS THAT THE POLISARIO WILL SAY YES TO NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS, AND WHEN THE MOROCCANS TRY TO INTRODUCE THEIR AUTONOMY PLAN AS THE BASIS FOR DISCUSSIONS, THE POLISARIO WILL SIMPLY INVOKE THE BAKER PLAN," SAID KASSIANIDES. TESTO AGREED, WONDERING WHETHER THE U.S. WOULD BE PREPARED TO ANNOUNCE ITS SUPPORT FOR THE AUTONOMY PLAN AT THE END OF THE PROPOSED TWO-MONTH MINURSO MANDATE IF NEGOTIATIONS WERE UNDERWAY BUT UNPRODUCTIVE. "SHOULD THERE BE A NEUTRAL THIRD PARTY TO DETERMINE WHETHER NEGOTIATIONS ARE HOPELESSLY BLOCKED? IF NOT, YOU COULD GET STUCK," KASSIANIDES COMMENTED.

GAMING THE UNSC

PAGE 04 RUEHFRA1456 C O N F I D E N T I A L

13. (C) NOTWITHSTANDING THESE MISGIVINGS, THE FRENCH INDICATED THAT THEY WERE ROUGHLY ON THE SAME PAGE AS WASHINGTON AND WOULD TRY TO BE HELPFUL. THE MFA PLANS TO CABLE WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK ON APRIL 11, INSTRUCTING ITS RESPECTIVE MISSIONS TO COORDINATE CLOSELY WITH THE DEPARTMENT ON THE TACTICS/CONTENT OF THE MINURSO MANDATE RENEWAL RESOLUTION. KASSIANIDES SAID THE FRENCH MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS WILL ENCOURAGE THE SYG TO BE AS FORWARD-LEANING AS POSSIBLE, BUT HE STRESSED THAT THE FRENCH LOOK TO WASHINGTON TO DO THE HEAVY LIFTING. "WE KNOW (PETER) VAN WALSUM WILL BE ADVISING THE SYG NOT TO ENGAGE TOO CLOSELY ON THE MOROCCAN PLAN, SO IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR YOU TO PASS THE OPPOSITE MESSAGE TO BAN KI MOON. THE LEAST HE CAN DO IS TO MAKE A POSITIVE REFERENCE TO THE MOROCCAN PLAN IN HIS NEXT REPORT," SAID KASSIANIDES, WHO SUGGESTED THAT THE U.S. WAS ALSO BEST-POSITIONED TO INFLUENCE PANAMA.

14. (C) AS FOR THE FRENCH, THEY PLAN TO ENGAGE WITH THE UK IN ITS CAPACITY OF HOLDING THE SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENCY (THEIR SENSE IS THAT THE UK HAS NOT REALLY FOCUSED ON THE

PAGE 05 RUEHFRA1456 C O N F I D E N T I A L

WESTERN SAHARA QUESTION) AND WITH SOUTH AFRICA (ALTHOUGH THE QUAI DOES NOT EXPECT SOUTH AFRICA TO BUDGE FROM ITS PRO-ALGERIAN LINE, THE FRENCH FEAR THAT IF THEY DO NOT AT LEAST GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF WINNING SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPORT, THE SOUTH AFRICANS WILL MERELY GROW PRICKLIER ON THIS AND OTHER QUESTIONS BEFORE THE UNSC). KASSIANIDES SAID THAT NEITHER THE RUSSIANS NOR THE CHINESE HAVE TIPPED THEIR HANDS, ALTHOUGH THE RUSSIANS HAVE MADE SOME PRO-ALGERIAN NOISES AND THE FRENCH FEAR THAT MOSCOW WILL LOOK FOR A QUID PRO QUO ON GEORGIA.

15. (C) COMMENT: WHILE THE FRENCH WOULD PREFER TO SEE THE MOROCCAN AUTONOMY PLAN SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR ANY DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND THE POLISARIO, AND THEIR INCLINATION WOULD BE TO EXTEND MINURO'S MANDATE RATHER THAN TO REDUCE IT (ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE MORE FREQUENTLY THE SUBJECT IS RAISED AT THE UN, THE MORE OPPORTUNITIES ALGERIA HAS TO MAKE MISCHIEF), THEY ARE EAGER TO SEE A U.S. ENDORSEMENT OF THE MOROCCAN PLAN AND WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARD THAT END.

PAGE 06 RUEHFRA1456 C O N F I D E N T I A L

PLEASE VISIT PARIS' CLASSIFIED WEBSITE AT:
[HTTP://WWW.STATE.SGOV.GOV/P/EUR/PARIS/INDEX.C FM](http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm)

STAPLETON